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LETTER DATED 7 AUGUST 1998 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 6 August 1998, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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Annex

Letter dated 6 August 1998 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the nineteenth monthly report on operations of the Stabilization Force (SFOR). I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Appendix

Nineteenth monthly report to the Security Council on the operations of the Stabilization Force

1. There are approximately 34,000 troops currently deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, with contributions from all countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and, with the departure of Malaysian troops from the theatre at the end of June, from 21 non-NATO countries.

2. Over the reporting period (21 June-20 July), SFOR continued to conduct surveillance and reconnaissance by means of ground and air patrols. Approximately 2,900 sorties were flown by combat aircraft, with the SFOR helicopter fleet flying approximately 117 hours.

3. SFOR has continued to monitor crossing points on the border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and to inspect government factories in order to help ensure compliance with the prohibition on the transport of weapons established by Security Council resolution 1160 (1998). No reports of non-compliance have been received.

4. Following the restructuring agreement concluded by the Office of the High Representative in February, SFOR has now withdrawn from three transmission towers used by Srpska Radio Television at Duja Nijva, Udrigovo and Leotar. It continued to secure the two remaining towers, at Veliki Zep in Multi-National Division North (MND(N)) and at Trebevic in MND (South-East).

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

5. The parties remain substantially compliant with the most military provisions of the Peace Agreement across the whole area of operations. However, over the reporting period there have again been isolated instances of arson attacks and inter-ethnic tensions.

6. SFOR continues to monitor compliance with the Common Licence Plate Programme and, over the reporting period, confiscated two Bosnian Serb military vehicles for a 30-day period for non-compliance with the Programme.

7. Over the reporting period, SFOR troops conducted a total of 304 military weapons storage site inspections: 75 Bosniac; 57 Bosnian Croat; 144 Bosnian Serb; and 28 Federation. Only minor discrepancies were noted. On 9 July, SFOR confiscated an SA-2 Fan Song radar unit from the Bosnian Serbs following unauthorized radar activity on 21 May in Banja Luka.

8. The Police Anti-Terrorist Brigade (PATB) and the Police Unit for the Protection of Persons and Buildings of the Republika Srpska Specialist Police remain compliant with the terms of the Peace Agreement and with the requirements established by SFOR on 15 August 1997. The Restructuring and Training Programme led by the United Nations International Police Task Force (IPTF) and monitored by SFOR began in early June, and 405 PATB officers had completed human dignity training by 11 July.

9. One illegal checkpoint was identified on 5 July and was dismantled without incident.

10. Over the reporting period, SFOR monitored a total of 1,463 training and movement activities: 505 Bosniac; 83 Bosnian Croat; 783 Bosnian Serb; and 92 Federation. SFOR imposed a training and movement ban from 6 to 12 July on Logistic Base 2204 of the Federation armed forces because of non-compliance during an activity conducted on 1 July. In addition, a ban was placed from 8 to 14 July on the 2nd Battalion Training Centre of the Bosnian Croat armed forces because of non-compliance during an exercise conducted from 19 to 30 June.

11. SFOR troops monitored 167 demining operations: 55 Bosniac; 57 Bosnian Croat; and 55 Bosnian Serb. A total of 29 anti-tank mines, 234 anti-personnel mines and 22 items of unexploded ordnance were removed. The lower than normal figures for this period reflect the upgrading and refresher training undertaken by all entity armed forces deminers between 1 and 12 July. All teams returned to the field on 13 July. There are currently no bans imposed on the entity armed forces for non-compliance with demining operations.

Cooperation with international organizations

12. Within its capabilities, SFOR continued to provide assistance to the international organizations in theatre, working routinely with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), IPTF, the Office of the High Representative, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

13. SFOR continues to support OSCE in its preparations for the September elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the provision of a secure environment for voter registration. The registration of parties, candidates and alliances took place as intended by the Provisional Elections Commission without incident.

14. SFOR continues to provide assistance to the Office of the High Representative in the field of civil air traffic. Approval from the Council of Ministers is still awaited for the revisions to the Memorandum of Understanding which will permit cargo operations and allow commercial aircraft to remain overnight at Sarajevo airport. The inaugural flight into Mostar airport took place on 7 July.

15. SFOR continues to play an active role in providing support to the Office of the High Representative's efforts to establish joint institutions, particularly the Standing Committee on Military Matters (SCMM). At the SCMM meeting of 2 July, the programme of work for the coming six months was discussed. Issues to be considered include the potential for joint activities between the entity armed forces and the proposals put forward by SFOR for the use of military helicopters to cross the inter-entity boundary line when carrying senior government officials from the joint institutions and entity governments.

Outlook

16. Tension is expected to rise in the run-up to the September elections. The return of refugees and displaced persons is also likely to be accompanied by increased tension and acts of intimidation and violence. SFOR will continue to help ensure the provision of a secure environment to support and promote returns, in accordance with its mandate.